

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION



## *TRAVEL TIDBITS*

*“ONE APHIS - - SHARING INFORMATION”*

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**AUGUST 2003**

This is the Fourth issuance of “Travel Tidbits” for 2003. Travel Tidbits are designed to provide Agency personnel with the current policies and procedures relating to federal travel and transportation practices. Travel Tidbits will be emailed to program travel contacts on a monthly basis and they are also available online at [www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel.html). The information provided is obtained from General Services Administration’s (GSA) Board of Contract Appeals (BCA) Decisions, Comptroller General (CG) Decisions, Departmental and Agency policy, as well as, the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). This publication is to be used as a tool to assist with the interpretation of travel regulations and to provide instructions of travel processes.

### **I. APPROVAL OF FOREIGN TRAVEL**

It is MRP policy to authorize foreign travel when it is in the interest of the work of the agency and the expense to be incurred can be justified in the furtherance of its programs. Foreign travel may be performed for the benefit of another department, agency, foreign government, and/or international organization, etc. Foreign travel is subject to laws and regulations that are appropriate under the circumstances involved.

#### **a. FOREIGN TRAVEL PROCESS**

All requests for foreign travel must be approved by the Administrator. A form AD-202 must be completed; including the purpose of travel and the

correct country and city codes (this information can be obtained online at [www.nfc.usda.gov](http://www.nfc.usda.gov), and the appropriate foreign per diem rates which may also be obtained online at <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/prdm/>. In addition, the name and phone number of a contact person must be included on the form.

The completed request must be forwarded or faxed to the Travel Services Center (see page 3 of this document for the mailing address and fax number) at least 2 weeks prior to the beginning date of travel. Travel Services will review the request for accuracy and legitimacy prior to forwarding it to the Administrator. The contact person indicated on the request will be notified of the final action taken on the request (whether it was approved or disapproved) and the original document will be returned to the contact person.

#### b. COUNTRY CLEARANCES

It is required of ALL APHIS employees traveling abroad to request country clearance. Country clearances are designed to notify the Embassy, within the country you are traveling, of your expected arrival, purpose of your visit, and contact points. Notification of your arrival on official business will enable the Embassy to locate you if an emergency situation occurs, or should circumstances arise which require the Embassy to assist you.

Countries outside of the Continental United States, including border countries (Mexico and Canada) also require country clearances before entry is permitted. Failure to comply may result in the exclusion of entry. Please submit your country clearance request to your designated Foreign Travel Coordinator 6-10 working days prior to your travel. The revised form may be obtained from your travel coordinator or online at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel>.

#### c. PASSPORTS

Contact your program's designated travel coordinator in International Services for information regarding official passports, visa's and/or medical requirements/restrictions, or any general assistance you may need regarding foreign travel regulations.

## **II. USE OF A FOREIGN FLAG CARRIER**

You are required by 49 U.S.C. 40118, the “Fly America Act”, to use U.S. flag air carrier service for all air travel funded by the U.S. Government, except as provided in 301-10.135(a) thru (g) or when one of the following exceptions applies:

### **I. When traveling between the United States and another country:**

- (a) If a U.S. flag air carrier offers nonstop or direct service (no aircraft change) from your origin to your destination, you must use the U.S. flag air carrier service unless such use would extend your travel time, including delay at origin, by 24 hours or more.
- (b) If a U. S. flag air carrier does not offer nonstop or direct service between your origin and your destination, you must use a U.S. flag carrier on every portion of the route where it provides service unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, such use would:
  - (1) Increase the number of aircraft changes you must make outside of the U.S. by 2 or more; or
  - (2) Extend your travel time by at least 6 hours or more; or
  - (3) Require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

**II. When traveling solely outside the United States, and a U.S. flag air carrier provides service between your origin and your destination, you must always use the U.S. flag air carrier unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, one or more of the circumstances mentioned above applies.**

**III. The Agency may authorize the use of foreign flag carrier service when transportation is paid directly or reimbursed to your Agency by a non-federal source.**

*Please refer to 301-10.131 of the Federal Travel Regulations for all requirements on the use of U.S. air carriers.*

**Note:** When you choose a foreign flag carrier service while booking your reservation with the Travel Management Center, the travel agent will inform you that the foreign flag carrier service must be approved by a Agency Travel Coordinator. You must contact an Agency Travel Coordinator and provide justification for the use of a foreign flag carrier service. The travel coordinator will determine whether or not the justification meets the criteria as an exception to the Fly America Act.

*This publication was prepared by:*

*Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Financial Management Division  
Travel Service Center  
4700 Riverdale Road, Unit 55  
Riverdale, MD 20737  
Phone (301) 734-5361  
Fax (301) 734-8064  
Web address: [www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel.html)*